PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS, 1911

LIBERAL PARTY PLATFORM

Address
to the Electors of Ontario
Issued by

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GENERAL REFORM ASSOCIATION
FOR ONTARIO
36 TORONTO ST., - TORONTO

MR. N. W. ROWELL'S ADDRESS.

PRESENTING THE PLATFORM OF THE LIBERAL PARTY.

To the Electors of Ontario:

By the action of the Government the Legislative Assembly of this Province has been dissolved before the expiry of the legislative term, and the electors are called upon to bear the trouble and expense of an unnecessary general election during an inclement season of the year. Nominations take place December 4, the election on December 11.

The Government of Sir James Whitney has disappointed the progressive forces in our Province by its failure to grasp the urgency and importance of the settlement and development of New Ontario, by its failure to devise an adequate policy to promote the great agricultural interests of the Province, and by its failure to manifest practical sympathy with progressive measures of social and moral reform.

The Liberal party considers the development of New Ontario one of the supreme opportunities and most urgent obligations of the Government, requiring the whole time and thought of a responsible Minister of the Crown; and it believes that its successful development means increased prosperity to every citizen of Ontario. We recognize that agriculture is the basic industry of this Province, and that an intelligent and far-sighted policy demands a great advance on all progressive lines.

Even more important than the successful material development of the Province is the promotion of the social, moral and industrial welfare of the people, and the development among us of the highest type of citizenship. The rapid growth of industrial centres has created new and important problems with which our Provincial Government should deal. It is the duty of the Government by wise measures to contribute to social, educational and moral reform.

Holding this faith, as leader of the Liberal party of this Province, I beg to submit the following statement of policy, and to appeal to all electors, irrespective of party, to rally to its support:

New Ontario Development.

In order that the Government may enter seriously upon the problem of the settlement and development of New Ontario, we propose the creation of a Department of Immigration and Colonization, to be presided over by a Minister of the Crown, who shall devote his whole time and energies to this important work, among other matters: to the promotion of settlement; building of roads; insuring other necessary transportation facilities; providing drainage requirements; assisting pioneer settlers to secure loans to a limited extent on the security of the lands occupied by them, repayable over a term of years; giving special assistance to pioneer schools.

Our further policy is the maintenance of the colonization character of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway; the protection of shippers and settlers from inequitable rates by subjecting the railway to regulation by the Dominion Railway Commission and the general railway law; removing just grounds of complaint by permitting actions at law against the railway without the necessity of first obtaining permission from the Attorney-General; placing the railway in the same position as other railways in the matter of payment of municipal taxes; the extension of the railway with all practicable speed to a suitable outlet to Hudson Bay, and branches as required for the development of the country.

The encouragement of mining by a reduction of the fees for prospecting and recording, by insuring reasonable transportation facilities, and by giving increased stability to mining titles. The securing for underground miners an eight-hour day.

The boundary between Ontario and Manitoba should be so de-limited as to give Ontario a suitable port on Hudson Bay for ocean-going vessels.

Agriculture.

We believe that the people of Ontario view with grave concern the serious decline in the rural population of this

Province, as disclosed by the recent census, and we propose the immediate appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the causes thereof, and to suggest measures which in the opinion of the Commission should be taken to prevent any further decline and promote the general agricultural interests of the Province. The Commission should be specially instructed to consider and report upon adequate technical instruction in farming in our rural schools, and special technical education in fruit-growing districts.

In the meantime we propose to adopt measures—

To bring about the active immigration into this Province of suitable people for settlement and employment upon our farm lands; to induce land-seeking farmers to remain in the Province by locating in New Ontario instead of emigrating to Western Canada.

To secure the building of a good roads system throughout Ontario by an issue of Provincial bonds or by other assistance on an adequate scale, thereby facilitating traffic and insuring quick delivery of farm and garden products.

To extend in every feasible way public light, power and telephone services to the farms of the Province.

To provide for the establishment of suitable demonstration farms throughout Ontario; to promote Ontario's apple and general fruit-growing industry by establishing demonstration orchards, and to advertise widely the important and growing apple industry by holding an annual National Apple Show.

To appoint a sufficient number of Provincial inspectors with authority to stamp out the evils arising from noxious weeds, insect pests and diseases of orchard trees.

To make Guelph Agricultural College more useful by enlarging its sphere of experimental work, especially in stock breeding.

Taxation.

Social justice demands the removal of existing inequalities in taxation, and we propose the amendment of the Assessment Act to permit municipalities to exempt improvements from taxation either in whole or in part.

To provide that the property of railway and other public utility corporations shall contribute to the revenues of municipalities and of the Province on a basis of assessment and taxation in every respect equal to the assessment and taxation of the property of private citizens.

Social and Industrial Betterment.

The betterment of the social and industrial condition of the masses of the people shall be one of our supreme concerns.

The evils of intemperance constitute a grave social peril. During the ensuing Parliamentary term we will consider the best form of legislation to deal effectively with these evils, and the electors will have an opportunity of passing upon our proposals at the following general election.

We will immediately abolish the three-fifths vote in local option contests and substitute a simple majority.

During the continuance of the license system we will secure the removal of its administration from political influence.

We promise the passage of a measure to provide for compensation of workmen injured in our industries, and to their dependents where such injuries result in death, modeled after the recent legislation in Great Britain, and to insure in all cases the payment of such compensation.

Special investigation and supervision by the Province of matters affecting the health and well-being of industrial workers and communities; encouragement of town planning and the prevention of the growth of congested areas; the suppression of tuberculosis and the avoidance of occupational diseases.

Education.

If the youth of this Province are to receive an education to fit them for citizenship, a more progressive and adequate educational policy is urgently needed. We propose:

To promote a more co-operative relation between the primary schools, the high schools and the universities; more liberal grants in aid of primary education; the promotion of industrial training and technical instruction in urban and rural communities; the restoration of model schools, with a view to increase the supply and efficiency of teachers.

To provide, through adequate training schools, a sufficient supply of competent teachers and thus insure under proper regulations that the pupils in every school in the Province shall receive a thorough English education.

Public Ownership and Conservation.

We believe in and will support the public ownership and operation of public utilities, and especially the utilization of waterpowers throughout the Province for the generation and distribution of electricity; also the acquisition and operation of telephone lines.

A scientific policy of forestry, including the necessary reforestration of suitable Crown lands; the conservation of our timber resources by the revesting in the Crown of berths containing young pine timber; an adequate system of fire ranging to protect Crown timber; the sale of Crown timber by public auction rather than by private sale or tender; assistance financially, upon the principle adopted in regard to drainage, to municipalities that desire to purchase and reforest the thousands of acres of waste land now existing and which increase yearly in many portions of the Province.

We condemn the alienation by the Whitney Government of millions of acres of the public domain by way of land grants to railway corporations.

Ontario Railway and Municipal Board.

There should be an enlargement of the powers and reorganization of the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board so as to render it an influential and effective tribunal in the public interest.

Administration of Justice.

It will be our duty to combat at all times by legislative enactment and administrative action such trusts, mergers and other combinations of capital as stifle competition, increase the cost of living and impair political independence.

We will abolish the right of the Government to deny access to the courts to those who claim to have suffered wrong or damage through the action of the Government or any Commission appointed thereunder.

Civil Service Reform.

The spoils and patronage systems are inimical to the highest efficiency of the civil service and to the interests of the country. We propose the creation of a Civil Service Commission, and that appointments and promotions in the service shall be by merit after competitive examination.

Electoral Reform.

We will prohibit under adequate penalties all corporations over which the Province has jurisdiction from making election campaign contributions; require the publication of all election campaign contributions to candidates and political organizations; to provide for the appointment of a public prosecutor as in England, whose duty it shall be to intervene in contested elections to see that all who are guilty of electoral fraud or corruption are duly prosecuted.

I shall take an early opportunity of discussing before the electors the policies herein outlined, and I appeal to all who believe in these policies to give to the Liberal candidates throughout this Province their cordial support.

Yours respectfully,

NEWTON W. ROWELL.